

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Notice of Availability of Funds for AmeriCorps*VISTA Program Grants in the Southwest Cluster with supplementary information

AGENCY: Corporation for National and Community Service.

ACTION: Notice of funding availability.

SUMMARY: The Corporation for National and Community Service (hereinafter “the Corporation”) announces the availability of approximately \$1,200,000 in fiscal year 2003 funds to award AmeriCorps*VISTA program grants to eligible nonprofit and public organizations providing services in the Corporation's Southwest cluster (AR, AZ, CO, KS, LA, MO, NM, OK, TX). Applicant organizations are not required to be geographically-based in the nine-state southwest cluster, so long as the proposed grant activities will provide services within one or more of those nine states. The Corporation anticipates making between 5 and 8 AmeriCorps*VISTA program grants under this announcement. Each grant budget will support a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 40 AmeriCorps*VISTA members on a full-time basis for one year of service. The Corporation will make awards covering a period not to exceed one year with a potential for an additional two years of funding, contingent upon satisfactory performance, the availability of funds, and other criteria established in the award agreement. These estimates are projections for the guidance of potential applicants. The Corporation is not bound by any estimate in this notice. Publication of this announcement does not obligate the Corporation to award any specific number of grants or to obligate the entire amount of grant funds available, or any part thereof, for grants under the AmeriCorps*VISTA program. Applicable regulations include the uniform administrative requirements for grants and agreements with institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other nonprofit organizations, 45 CFR part 2543 or the uniform administrative requirements for grants and cooperative agreements to State and local governments, 45 CFR Part 2541.

AmeriCorps*VISTA assigns individuals 18 years and older, on a full-time, year-long basis, to public and private nonprofit organizations whose goals are in accord with AmeriCorps*VISTA's legislative mission. (42 U.S.C. 4951) The purpose of these program grants is to create and expand opportunities for individuals in one of the following areas: (1) homeland security, (2) seniors in poverty.

Preference will be given to AmeriCorps*VISTA Projects serving as "umbrella sponsorships" where the applicant provides fiscal and programmatic capacity on behalf of small, community-based (secular and faith based) organizations, and/or local sites of the sponsoring organization. Applicants should be local, state or national organizations working alone or in conjunction with local affiliates that share a vision and common goal of working with low-income communities to achieve long-lasting antipoverty objectives. Proposed projects should focus on:

- (1) promotion of partnerships and collaboration between the public and private sectors including businesses, community-based organizations (secular and faith-based) and other service programs;
- (2) recruitment, training, and coordination of local volunteers;
- (3) mobilization of resources needed to support the project; and
- (4) development of a sustainable capacity in local communities.

While there is no specific match requirement, the level of matching contributions will also be considered in the final application selection.

Eligible applicants for AmeriCorps*VISTA program grants supporting these initiatives must be private non-profit or public organizations. AmeriCorps*VISTA sponsoring organizations may apply

without affecting the status of their current projects. Projects should be state-based (one legal applicant with site(s) in one state or in multiple states within the southwest cluster - AR, AZ, CO, KS, LA, MO, NM, OK, TX). Applicant organizations are not required to be geographically-based in the nine-state southwest cluster, as long as the proposed grant activities will provide services within one or more of those nine states. Eligible nonprofit and public organizations, including those that have not applied for federal assistance from the Corporation in the past, as well as interested community-based organizations (secular and faith-based), are encouraged to apply.

You can also get more information about AmeriCorps*VISTA project sponsorship at <http://www.americorps.org/vista/sponsorinfo.html>

DATES: Applications must be received at the Corporation by 5:00 p.m. on August 4, 2003. We anticipate announcing selections under this Notice no later than September 8, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit your application to the following address: Corporation for National and Community Service, 120 South Federal Place, #315, Santa Fe, NM 87501. Due to delays in delivery of regular mail to government offices, there is no guarantee that an application sent by regular mail will arrive in time to be considered. We therefore suggest that you use U.S.P.S. priority mail or a commercial overnight delivery service to make sure that you meet the deadline. We will not accept an application that is submitted via facsimile. Applications for AmeriCorps*VISTA will not be accepted via eGrants at this time.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kathie Ferguson, (303) 312-7959. The TDD number is 202-565-2799. For a printed copy of this NOFA and the supplementary information and application guidelines (available on-line), contact Ms. Ferguson at (303) 312-7959. Upon request, this information will be made available in alternate formats for people with disabilities.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

The Corporation is a federal government corporation that encourages Americans of all ages and backgrounds to engage in community-based service. This service addresses the nation's educational, public safety, environmental, and other human needs to achieve direct and demonstrable results. In addressing those needs, we strive to foster civic responsibility, strengthen the ties that bind us together as Americans, and provide educational opportunities for those who make a substantial commitment to service. We support a range of national service programs, including AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and the National Senior Service Corps.

AmeriCorps*VISTA, a component of AmeriCorps, is authorized under the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended (Pub. L. 93-113, 42 U.S.C. 4950, et seq.). The statutory mandate of AmeriCorps*VISTA is ``to strengthen and supplement efforts to eliminate and alleviate poverty and poverty-related problems in the United States by encouraging and enabling persons from all walks of life, all geographical areas, and all age groups . . . (to) assist in the solution of poverty and poverty-related problems, and . . . to generate the commitment of private sector resources, to encourage volunteer service at the local level, and to strengthen local agencies and organizations to carry out the purpose (of the program)." (42 U.S.C. 4951) AmeriCorps*VISTA carries out its legislative mandate by assigning individuals 18 years and older, on a full-time, year-long basis, to public and private nonprofit organizations whose goals are in accord with AmeriCorps*VISTA's legislative mission. Each AmeriCorps*VISTA project must focus on the mobilization of community resources, the transference of

skills to community residents, and the expansion of the capacity of community-based organizations to solve local problems. Programming should encourage permanent, long-term solutions to problems confronting low-income communities rather than short-term approaches for handling emergency needs.

AmeriCorps*VISTA project sponsors must actively elicit the support and/or participation of local public and private sector elements in order to enhance the chances of a project's success as well as to make the activities undertaken by AmeriCorps*VISTA members self-sustaining when the Corporation no longer provides resources.

PURPOSE OF THIS ANNOUNCEMENT

This is a regional effort to create and expand opportunities for individuals in one of the following areas: (1) homeland security, or (2) seniors in poverty.

*AmeriCorps*VISTA projects in this initiative will focus on:*

1. Local, state or national organizations working alone or in conjunction with local affiliates that share a vision and common goal of working with low-income communities to achieve long-lasting antipoverty objectives;
2. Promotion of partnerships and collaboration between the public and private sectors including businesses, community-based organizations; faith-based organizations and other service programs;
3. Recruitment, training, and coordination of local volunteers;
4. Mobilization of resources needed to support the project; and
5. Development of a sustainable capacity in local low-income communities.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants for AmeriCorps*VISTA program grants supporting these initiatives must be public or private non-profit organizations. AmeriCorps*VISTA sponsoring organizations may apply without affecting the status of their existing projects.

Eligible applicants include organizations that currently operate a Corporation-funded program or are applying for other Corporation funding. However, applicants must differentiate between this grant's proposed activities and those of the currently-funded program or pending application.

Projects should be state-based (one legal applicant with site(s) in one or more of the nine states in the Southwest cluster - AR, AZ, CO, KS, LA, MO, NM, OK, TX) to be considered. Applicant organizations are not required to be geographically-based in the nine-state southwest cluster, so long as the proposed grant activities will provide services within one or more of those nine states. Preference will be given to AmeriCorps*VISTA Projects serving as "umbrella sponsorships" where the applicant provides fiscal and programmatic capacity on behalf of small, community-based (secular and faith based) organizations and/or local sites of the sponsoring organization.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Each grant budget will support a minimum of fifteen (15) and a maximum of forty (40) AmeriCorps*VISTA members on a full-time basis for one year of service. The average Federal cost of an AmeriCorps*VISTA service year, i.e., total Federal cost divided by total number of members, will range from approximately \$12,000 to \$15,000 in the continental United States depending upon the location of

the assignment(s). Specific budget guidance is available in the project application kit; average allowance costs contained in the instructions should be used to prepare the budget submission.

Each grant will include funds for the grantee to pay: a monthly subsistence allowance for AmeriCorps*VISTA members that is commensurate with the cost-of-living of the assignment area and covers the cost of food, housing, utilities, and incidental expenses; an end-of-service cash stipend payment, accrued at the rate of \$100 per month, for all members; and relocation expenses for those AmeriCorps*VISTA members who must relocate in order to serve. The grant will also include funds for member in-service training, member supervision, and member and supervisor assignment-related transportation.

The following costs will be covered by the Corporation: health support for all AmeriCorps*VISTA members; a child care allowance for eligible AmeriCorps*VISTA members; travel from home of record to training to assignment for all AmeriCorps*VISTA members as well as travel home at the end of service. **AmeriCorps education awards are not available at this time.**

Grant applicants should demonstrate their commitment to matching the Federal contribution toward the operation of the AmeriCorps*VISTA program grant by offsetting all, or part of, the costs of member supervision, transportation, and training, as well as the basic costs of the program itself (e.g., space, telephone, etc.). This support can be achieved through cash or in-kind contributions.

Publication of this announcement does not obligate the Corporation to award any specific number of grants or to obligate the entire amount of funds available, or any part thereof, for grants under the AmeriCorps*VISTA program.

SELECTION CRITERIA

In awarding this grant, the Corporation will consider: program design and program management (60%); organizational capacity (25%); and budget/cost effectiveness (15%). While there is no specific match requirement, the level of matching contributions will be considered in final application selection. Preference will be given to AmeriCorps*VISTA Projects serving as "umbrella sponsorships" where the applicant provides fiscal and programmatic capacity on behalf of small, community-based (secular and faith based) organizations. The Corporation will make all final decisions concerning the award and may require revisions to the grant proposal in order to achieve the objectives under this Notice.

GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY

After evaluating the overall quality of the proposal and its responsiveness to the criteria noted above, the Corporation will take into consideration whether funded projects are: (1) geographically diverse within the nine-state Southwest cluster, including projects in both urban and rural areas, and (2) in areas of high concentration of low-income residents.

PROGRAM PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The Corporation will make awards covering a period not to exceed one year with a potential for an additional two years of funding, contingent upon satisfactory performance, the availability of funds, and other criteria established in the award agreement. These estimates are projections for the guidance of potential applicants. The Corporation is not bound by any estimate in this notice.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Project Progress Reports are submitted on a quarterly basis and Sponsor Payroll Verification Forms are submitted bi-weekly to the Corporation State Office. Financial Status Reports are submitted on a quarterly basis to the Cluster Service Center. Award notices will include detailed information regarding reporting requirements.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPLY

In order to help us gauge the number of applications we are likely to receive, please send an email by July 14, 2003, to kferguso@cns.gov, stating that you plan to submit an application for the Southwest cluster AmeriCorps*VISTA Program Grant competition. Although submission of the notice of intent to apply is not mandatory, your email will help the Corporation to plan more efficiently for our review. In your email, include the name of your organization, address, contact person, and phone number.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

To apply for this grant, you must:

1. Meet all of the requirements contained in this Notice of Funding Availability with Supplementary Information.
2. Follow the 2003 AmeriCorps*VISTA Program Grant Application Instructions and complete the applications available on the Corporation's website at <http://www.cns.gov/whatshot/notices.html>.

We request that you include with your paper application an electronic version of the application on a 3.5" diskette or CD-ROM in Microsoft Word or a text format.

Cindy R. Salavantis
Acting Director, Office of Field Liaison

Date